

## Mahoney Inspects Fort Pierce Shore Security

### Congressman Discusses Homeland Security with Officials

(March 18, 2008)

(Ft. Pierce, FL) - Congressman Tim Mahoney (FL-16) visited the U.S. Coast Guard Station in Ft. Pierce. During the visit, the Congressman and officials discussed the missions and activities carried out by the men and women assigned to Station Ft. Pierce and the importance of these issues at a time when homeland security is a top priority.

"Today's visit allowed me to see first-hand the significant role that the Ft. Pierce and Florida Coast Guard has in homeland security," said Congressman Mahoney. "In Florida, a strong Coast Guard force is crucial at a time when securing our borders is more important than ever. I will continue fighting to protect Florida and am committed to work toward signing the Coast Guard Authorization Act into law."

Congressman Mahoney at the Helm with Chief Warrant Officer Todd Kagarise, Commander Officer of the Ft. Pierce Coast Guard Station

Congressman Mahoney discussed the Coast Guard Authorization Act, H.R. 2830, with officers from Station Miami and Station Ft. Pierce. The legislation authorizes more than \$8.3 billion for the U.S. Coast Guard for Fiscal Year 2008, including an increase of \$59 million for marine safety and search and rescue funding. The bill also:

- Allows states to inspect and enforce the Federal ballast water treatment standards established in the bill;
- Requires the Coast Guard to submit a report to Congress on other vessel-related pathways for invasive species, such as the hulls and anchors of ships;
- Authorizes an end-of-year military strength level of 45,000 active duty personnel for Fiscal Year 2008;
- Makes permanent the post-9/11 increase in the Coast Guard's allowable number of officers from 6,200 to 6,700;
- Authorizes the Coast Guard to ensure that commercial fishing vessels comply with established regulations, by establishing a training program for the operators of commercial fishing vessels and requiring that new fishing vessels be constructed and maintained to specific standards; and
- Allows the Coast Guard to establish a Safety Management System for domestic passenger vessels, which is similar to the existing requirement for passenger vessels on foreign voyages.

The legislation passed through several committees and is currently waiting to be moved to the House floor. The Speaker has identified the legislation as a priority and hopes to move it to the floor in the coming months.

Coast Guard Station Fort Pierce is located in Fort Pierce, FL on the north end of Hutchison Island and was established in 1975. The four acre facility is also home to three additional Coast Guard units; USCGC BLUEFIN, USCGC CORMORANT and Aids to Navigation Team Fort Pierce.

Station Fort Pierce routinely conducts joint operations with an extensive network of interagency partners including U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office, Indian River County Sheriff's Office and Martin County Sheriff's Office.

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